Strategies to Increase Persistence to Successful Graduation

Strategy	Rationale	KDE Recommendation	Needed Resources and Structures in Place
1. Mandate high school graduation or equivalency as compulsory for everyone below the age of 18	To compete in 21st century, all citizens need at least a high school education that is a passport to success in further learning and work. Therefore, It is appropriate to eliminate the idea of dropping out before achieving a diploma and to provide a "second best chance" credential to those who do not.	Increase the compulsory attendance age to 18. Attainment of the high school diploma is the goal for every student. If a student will exit before earning the diploma, at least one of the following credentials must be attained before the student is allowed to exit: Kentucky Employability Certificate through Workkeys; Certificate of Attainment for some students with disabilities; or Kentucky High School Equivalency Diploma (GED) through the Secondary GED option program.	

2. Ensure that every student receives individualized supports and "rapid response" interventions focused on readiness for and successful transition to the next level of learning, including expanded learning time and opportunity and access to non-traditional delivery systems	Patterns of performance and behavior that put students at risk of drop out are identifiable and they can be paired with responsive strategies. It is more efficient to intervene early. If students are doing grade-level work when they enter middle school, when they transition to high school, and have a successful 9th grade year, they are more likely to attain a diploma and be ready for college and work.	Develop on track indicators for successful transition from high school that begin in the primary grades. From those indicators, develop an early warning system to identify and intervene with students who are not making sufficient progress, especially at key transition points. Require the reallocation and prioritization of state, district, school and community resources to students identified as being at high risk of academic failure, which is putting them at risk of not persisting to graduation. Provide schools with model curricula, instructional strategies, and assessments for transitional courses in math, reading and sciences.	

		Engage KSBA and KASC in development of companion model policies for dropout prevention based on recent research. The policies would lay a path for implementing these dropout prevention strategies systemically in each district. KDE to facilitate and ensure alignment at state-level. As examples: policies that will eliminate grade retention in favor of extended time and opportunity to learn; and, policies that would provide incentives for students with substantial need to participate in acceleration programs. Hold districts accountable for implementation of Individual Learning Plans. Ensure that every student, with special emphasis on students at risk, is engaged in a course of study related to his/her	

| | | career interest. Ensure that all students are engaged in relevant extracurricular activities.

Make available a web-based curriculum (a) for students in alternative placements. Require, unless waived, that students be supported with this curriculum if high-quality teachers and instruction are not provided locally.

Develop targeted intervention programs for districts unable to boost graduation rates, especially among underserved populations. In extreme cases, suspend local control of funding allocations including but not limited to Extended School Services, and Professional Development. Include district approval of master schedule and teaching assignments to ensure that time | |
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		and instructional resources are being allocated in ways that create the best chance of success for at risk students.	
3. Expand student options and non-traditional pathways to graduation, including options to recover missing credits and pathways that compress time to credential and work.	The structure of the traditional comprehensive high school does not meet the needs of all students. Older, under-credited students are not likely to be successful when confined to a traditional school structure. Youth who disconnect from the traditional school are unlikely to return.	Establish, through regulation, additional categories and flexibility for schools within schools, "Twilight Schools", early college high schools and other pathways where learning is highly individualized. Include programs for older, under credited students in which credits are earned on a performance basis. Construct additional options for students to earn a diploma through partnerships with community colleges in career and technical fields and for students in alternative schools. Require that incarcerated students	

		be in a curriculum leading to high school graduation, rather than the GED. Tie release of incarcerated students under the age of 18 to graduation at the end of the sentence.	
4. Expand reporting requirements at the state, district and school levels to accurately reflect disaggregated graduation rate data in ways that hold the system accountable for all students.	The public has limited access to data and easily understood information about which students are successfully completing high school, the implications of dropping out for the individual, and the economic consequences to the community.	Focus state and local attention on graduation rate based on a cohort model. Identify and publish data on all the ways, in addition to dropout, that students leave our schools without adequate education and opportunity. Examine all of the withdrawal codes within the pupil attendance regulation and ensure that SIS is capable of tracking and reporting in each category. Increase school/district	

		accountability for graduation rates with emphasis on specific targets for subpopulations that are graduating at lower levels.	
		Publish a Middle School Feedback Report, based on the On Track Indicators, to build awareness about the numbers of students who are transitioning successfully into high school.	
		Provide "extra credit or help" for districts and schools retaining students at high risk or recovering dropouts and supporting them to a diploma.	
5. Engage entire community (parents, business, community) in communicating and developing strategies for persistence to graduation.	If schools are to be successful in managing the dual agenda of high school reform – holding all students to higher standards at the same time that the school is being held accountable for increasing graduation rates – the public has	Leverage opportunities for family literacy services for students at risk of dropout in undereducated families. Provide information to districts about effective models for	

to be actively engaged.	community-based supports for students.	
	Engage community organizations as providers for mentoring, the provision of supplemental education services to students at risk and access to technology for learning.	
	Maintain a statewide campaign to inform students and the public at large about the importance of education and the value of postsecondary credentials. Specifically, for example, topical campaigns will provide and students and parents with specific information about earning power at various levels of educational attainment; the long-term impact of taking rigorous courses on a student's success in college and work; and, steps that every family	

		can take to plan for a college education beginning in the middle grades.	
6. Expand at risk students access to Career and Technical programs of study linked to applied academic learning beginning at the 9th grade level or before.	Research has shown many at-risk students become more engaged in learning and achievement increased when they see the connection to a career goal and relevant academic learning. However many students, especially at-risk students, have limited access to career and technical studies in middle school and early high school years.	Encourage schools to provide opportunities for at-risk students to have access to career and technical programs that are focused on preparing students for a career and industry recognized certifications.	